Homegrown Theorizing: Knowledge, Scholars, Theory*

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Abstract

In recent years, the discipline of International Relations (IR) has entered another of its turns: the homegrown turn. This new turn focuses on possible contributions to IR theorizing using non-Western knowledge and/or scholarship. This article deconstructs the idea of homegrown theorizing by focusing on its constitutive part, dealing separately with the aspects of knowledge, scholar, and theory, questioning thereby the differing meanings of homegrownness. Such an approach provides an initial framework that accomplishes two things: First, the paper discusses today's core Western IR community and its disciplinary sociology in terms of the main factors engendering present critiques of its scholarship. Second, it then becomes possible to pay attention to peripheral non-Western IR's position at a time of gradual post-Westernization, both world politically and within the discipline. Engaging with the pitfalls of Western IR and elaborating on the reasons not only explains the emergence of IR's homegrown turn, but also provides the basis for understanding how scholars engaging in homegrown theorizing can learn from the (past) mistakes of core scholarship. Dealing with the impact of globalization, Eurocentrism, presentism, and parochialism as the main problem areas of (Western) IR, the article concludes by providing a list of lessons to be taken into account when engaging in homegrown theorizing within the periphery.

Keywords: Homegrown theorizing, disciplinary sociology, non-Western IR, post-Western IR

1. Introduction

There is a new turn in International Relations (IR): the homegrown turn. This approach focuses on widening IR's theoretical bases by turning to new (in fact, at times rather old) sources from the non-Western world.[1] This new interest can be seen as a natural consequence of IR's broadly-perceived failure to meet the requirements inherent in its very name, that is, to be an international, even global discipline.[2] Scholars within Western academia and their

[1] Interestingly enough, neighboring fields of IR seem to be less engaged in this quest. A comparativist's recent call to pay more attention to China in order to develop better theories was based on the narrow recommendation to study China more closely as a possible empirical contribution to comparative theory building. There was no further specification about going to the level of Chinese knowledge or Chinese scholars. See Lily L. Tsai, "Bringing in China: Insights for Building Comparative Political Theory," *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 3 (2016): 295-328. In the case of Political Theory, the promises of comparative political theory will play a major role in expanding our understanding of non-Western political thought, and hence homegrown theorizing. For a recent overview, see Leigh Jenco, "Introduction: Thinking with the past: Political thought in and from the 'non-West'," *European Journal of Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (2016): 377-81.

[2] For the latter, see Amitav Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 647-59.

counterparts from semi-peripheral and non-Western parts of the globe have been engaged in a veritable attempt to theorize IR more globally. At this important juncture, this article will look at hurdles that should not be overlooked in IR's homegrown turn. Learning from the many mistakes and diverse unsuccessful attempts of mainstream IR in its previous theorizing efforts is a useful means to prevent old errors from being recreated in this new era of an emerging post-Western IR discipline.[3]

What were some of the most significant errors committed by an IR that was completely Western? First, the Western IR of the past and the present (to the extent of its partial continuity) was Eurocentric and Western-centric, due to the high degree of interwovenness. Furthermore, the sources it was using were not always those that provided the most representative and most verifiable interpretations of past thinkers even within their European-Western context. The third dimension of its problematic nature concerned the way theory was usually perceived to assume 'a sense of exteriority,' that is positioning itself outside history. This thinking coincides with a search for theoretical closure, which Buzan and Lawson warn us against.[4] However, by merely presenting these three major issue areas, one cannot establish a coherent framework from which to approach the future prospects of homegrown theorizing in times of a post-Western IR discipline. A more-detailed approach is needed to distinguish between three separate factors: knowledge, scholars, and theory. It is only through a broader engagement with these interacting dimensions that it becomes possible to discuss the premises of homegrownness at a time when post-Western pathways are recreating IR's disciplinarity.

How could one discuss the processes of theorizing with regard to these three distinct features? I propose to examine all these aspects as parts of homegrown theorizing. First, we need to explain what is meant by homegrown theorizing. In their treatment of this important question, Aydınlı and Biltekin give us the following answer: 'original theorizing in the periphery about the periphery.'[5] Therefore, homegrown theorizing is a form of theorizing that provides insights about the periphery, which takes place in locations outside the core. Their approach is also extendable to the Western world, which is not hegemonic in IR (for instance, continental Europe). At the same time, while this approach provides an initial explanation for the meaning of homegrown, we need to take a further step and deal with the idea of theorizing. In this regard, it is useful to turn to the newly emerging distinction between theory and theorizing. Buzan and Lawson, relying on work by Swedberg and Reus-Smit, understand theory as 'a statement about the explanation of a phenomenon,' and see theorizing as 'the "process through which theory is produced."'[6] Such an approach enables us to use theorizing as the bigger umbrella and, consequently, to perceive knowledge, scholars, and theory as different parts of theorizing. Therefore, exploring homegrown theorizing requires us to pay attention, separately and together, to the role of knowledge, scholars, and theory with regard to their own extent of homegrownness. The variations therein will point to the connection points that, at times, effectively obliterate the boundaries between the home and the global.

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[3] For an elaboration on post-Western IR, see Pierre Lizée, *A Whole New World: Reinventing International Studies for the Post-Western World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[4] Barry Buzan and George Lawson, "Theory, History, and the Global Transformation," *International Theory* 8, no. 3 (2016): 505, 508.

[5] Ersel Aydınlı and Gonca Biltekin, "Widening the World of IR: A typology of homegrown theorizing," *All Azimuth* 7, no. 1 (forthcoming).

[6] Buzan and Lawson, "Theory, History," 508; Christian Reus-Smit, "Theory, History, and Great Transformations," *International Theory* 8, no. 3 (2016): 422-35 who refers to Richard Swedberg's *The Art of Social Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014) and also his "Theorizing in Sociology and Social Science," *Theory and Society* 41, no. 1 (2012): 1-40.

At this juncture, it is useful to discuss the three parts of theorizing in the context of the problem areas presented above. By emphasizing the different levels of theorizing with regard to the main issues that generate a problematic Western IR, I go beyond a brief disciplinary sociological analysis of Western IR by presenting some useful points that could serve as an early warning mechanism for the emerging post-Western IR with its focus on homegrown theorizing. In this regard, the paper presents the general areas in which Western IR led to multiple mistakes and failures. The paper begins with the general state of knowledge, continues with the role of scholars, and finishes with the theory that arises from within such a context. Based on examples from different cases, it concludes by highlighting certain aspects that could help peripheral homegrown theorizing to avoid repeating past (and, at times, present) mistakes of core IR scholarship. The opening section explains the current approaches taken by the homegrown turn to set the stage for the consequent discussion on core IR's mistakes and the lessons thus provided for peripheral IR in the realms of knowledge, scholars, and theory.

2. Two Concepts: 'Homegrown' and 'Theorizing'

In their study of homegrown theorizing, Aydınlı and Biltekin (based on their approach that defined this form of theorizing as 'original theorizing in the periphery about the periphery') distinguish between three types: referential homegrown theorizing, homegrown alterations, and authentic homegrown theories. In the first one, IR-related theorizing is shown to rely on non-IR local thinkers, writers, or scholars, and the introduction of their concepts into the domain of IR. The second type relates to the ways in which core (Western) ideas or concepts are reshaped in order to coincide with indigenous meanings. The last type focuses on 'original concepts' developed 'out of geo-culturally specific experience and commonly used idioms of daily life' that are consequently carried over into IR.[7]

A recent work by Vineet Thakur presents a not so dissimilar framework for discussing the strategies that non-Western/peripheral IR communities can employ in overcoming certain obstacles in order to discover the scholarship in the core with their local insights that so far have been rather neglected. His focus is on three dimensions of engagement: plot, language, and characters. In Thakur's framework, which takes its clues from Karen Smith's earlier work,[8] non-Western theorizing is seen as a narrative with a plot shaped by the narrator's positionality. Language, on the other hand, demonstrates how concepts, among other things, are to be used or developed throughout the emerging narrative of the story told by non-Western theoretical newcomers. It is about engaging with Western concepts and reshaping them or about emphasizing and explaining (to outsiders, namely Western core IR scholars) existing local concepts. The last dimension, characters, focuses on the issues that take priority among all the possible areas to be studied by IR. As Thakur specifically deals with the contributions of Africa to IR theories, what emerges is a useful framework for discussing homegrown theorizing. His consequent proposal is to combine these three dimensions and provide two options for African theorizing in each case: remain at the same level, or provide different pathways in each category. This results in eight options ranging from 'same plot, same language, same characters' to 'same plot, different language, same

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[7]   Aydınlı and Biltekin, "Widening the World of IR".
[8]   Karen Smith, "Has Africa Got Anything to Say? African Contributions to the Theoretical Development of International Relations," *The Round Table* 98, no. 402 (2009): 269-94.

characters' to 'different plot, different language, different characters.'[9] This eight-options-framework can also be used with Aydınlı and Biltekin's tripartite typology on homegrown theorizing, as they both demonstrate the different pathways that can be used in enriching global IR with contributions by peripheral IR communities' theorizing moves.[10]

While these scholars and many others attempt to expand the usual spheres of engagement of disciplinary approaches, it is important to state at the beginning that using certain concepts for explaining only a certain country's or region's domestic/regional politics carries the risk of being less IR and more Area Studies in its narrow versions. The following sections will elaborate on this aspect. Furthermore, as a consequence of problems that one finds in core IR and its theorizing processes, scholars engaged in IR at a time of a post-Western turn should actively deal with certain questions before starting their own trial with homegrown theorizing. This process is covered in the following sections.

In order to provide a structured analysis of homegrown theorizing, the next three sections will deal with knowledge, scholars, and theory by discussing the extent to which one can perceive these three f/actors as homegrown parts of a broader theorizing enterprise. It starts with a broad discussion of knowledge, approaching it in a wider sense and elaborating the ways in which it takes shape and is used. This first part will also provide a detailed discussion of Western IR's failures, including Eurocentrism and problems of historical (mis) interpretation. The following section focuses on the positions and situatedness of scholars who, not infrequently, find themselves at the intersection of local and global theorizing. The possibilities of, and challenges to, homegrown theorizing will become clearer with regard to scholars' agential limits. The last part of this tripartite analysis will turn to the role of theory and the degree to which one can 'realize' homegrown theories.

3. Knowledge

By knowledge, I refer to the general arena of empirical and philosophical observations and sources used in this process. It also includes certain pre-theory components such as concepts. In Western IR, these include(d) historical materials, evaluations concerning contemporary political and social developments, myths, various literary works, and even folk wisdom. Therefore, knowledge can be seen as a part of theorizing processes, although on a separate level it can also be perceived as a useful contribution to our scholarly interests even in its atheoretical or pre-theorized stage. That does not necessarily mean that knowledge is never theory-laden, but this starting point assumes that knowledge can also precede theories. Based on these assumptions, one could state that knowing, for instance, about the world political transformations is a significant part of our discipline even when one does not use it for theorizing purposes.

Following these initial clarifications, it is useful to discuss the three problems encountered in core IR scholarship in the context of their position within the dimension of knowledge. First, there is the issue of Eurocentrism.[11] It is not merely a theoretical problem; it begins at the very start of knowledge accumulation. What kinds of knowledge are prioritized and how are these

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[9]   Vineet Thakur, "Africa and the Theoretical Peace in IR," *International Political Sociology* 9, no. 3 (2015): 213-29.

[10]   For another significant contribution on 'peripheral possibilities,' see Helen Louise Turton and Lucas G. Freire, "Peripheral Possibilities: Revealing originality and encouraging dialogue through a reconsideration of 'marginal' IR scholarship," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 19, no. 4 (2014): 535-57.

[11]   For a comprehensive overview, see John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

connected to questions of power? IR's predominant focus on European historical experiences is a primary example of this problematique. The expansion of European great powers with their concomitant practices of colonialism and imperialism,[12] provide the major tools of core IR mainstream's 'knowledge pool.' Even when core-periphery encounters present important sources of historical knowledge, for example, Europeans' 'discovery' of the Americas or the race relations integral to Western-Eastern-Southern relationships, it is the perspective of Western knowledge which becomes the 'standard narrative.' These assumptions signify not only the virtually total absence of non-Western knowledge, but also the dominance of a certain version of knowledge within the West.[13] The frequently mentioned example of the Cold War was the most recent case from the twentieth century. Four decades of 'hot wars' in the non-Western parts of our globe were neglected at the expense of the rather questionable balance of terror that shaped the quotidian experiences of Western/Northern societies.[14]

The second aspect that necessitates our attention is the way in which past Western thinkers and their ideas have been interpreted and used by scholars of the core IR communities. Recent revisionist historiographies of the discipline provide innumerable instances of early scholarship's ideational confusion and, at times, clear errors in dealing with significant political philosophers and earlier thinkers whose ideas would impact on a gradually growing discipline.[15] In this regard, the last two decades provided us with very substantive clarifications about the problematic fashion in which first and second generation IR scholars of the core (the US and the UK) have presented rather questionable, if not caricaturized, accounts of political ideas which have world political relevance.[16] Obviously, some of these problems relate to the theory dimension, that is, tendencies to create reified theoretical summaries of political thinkers' wide-ranging studies. However, even the disciplinary choices that led to seeing in Thucydides or Hobbes the founding fathers of (realist) IR are examples of this type of rather narrow knowledge preference.[17] Their problematic consequences are difficult to set aside, especially due to the repeated ways in which the earlier interpretations survive (in a path-dependent manner) thanks to mainstream IR textbooks, again written by scholars of IR's core in the US, and, to a lesser extent, in the UK.[18]

A further difficulty that lies at the foundation of mainstream core IR is its reliance on a certain category of thinkers, tending to ignore those earlier philosophers or scholars whose

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[12] However, it is important to state that the colonialism and imperialism dimensions of this story are often overlooked, not least by the English School. See William A. Callahan, "Nationalising International Theory: Race, Class and the English School," *Global Society* 18, no. 4 (2004): 305-23. For a work regarding overcoming this dynamic in IR, see David Long and Brian C. Schmidt, eds., *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005).

[13] In this regard, even within Europe, the histories of the Balkans or Eastern Europe tend to be evaluated only within a comparison to their Western European neighbors. See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

[14] Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

[15] For most recent examples, see Michael Jackson and Thomas Moore, "Machiavelli's Walls: The legacy of realism in international relations theory," *International Politics* 53, no. 4 (2016): 447-65; Nicolas Guilhot, "The First Modern Realist: Felix Gilbert's Machiavelli and the Realist Tradition in International Thought," *Modern Intellectual History* 13, no. 3 (2016): 681-711; Fayçal Falaky, "A Forsaken And Foreclosed Utopia: Rousseau and international relations," *European Journal of Political Theory* 15, no. 1 (2014): 61-76.

[16] For an interesting engagement by IR scholars with philosophers and theorists, see Richard Ned Lebow et al., eds., *The Return of the Theorists – Dialogues with Great Thinkers in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[17] Andrew R. Novo, "Where We Get Thucydides Wrong: The Fallacies of History's First 'Hegemonic' War," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 27, no. 1 (2016): 1-21.

[18] Benjamin De Carvalho, Halvard Leira, and John M. Hobson, "The Big Bangs of IR: The myths that your teachers still tell you about 1648 and 1919," *Millennium* 39, no. 3 (2011): 735-58.

ideational contributions are not in line with the disciplinary expectations of mid- to late-twentieth-century IR core scholarship. One example is the way early proponents of certain peace movements or social movements were set aside in IR's accumulation of knowledge.[19] Although the two world wars are seen as a major impetus leading to the establishment of a scientific study of world politics (mainly with the aim of finding ways to prevent such future carnage), the new discipline's core knowledge collectors, that is Western IR's hegemonic epistemic community did not show much interest in the earlier peace movements and thinkers. The prevalence of war, strategy, and geopolitics weighed heavily against those more idealistic approaches.

The third aspect, namely exteriority towards/from history and theoretical closure, is by its very nature something that should be more directly discussed in the section on theory. However, tied to the explanations stated in the context of knowledge dimension, it is important to underline that such detachedness from history and theoretical closure could only emerge as a consequence of the Eurocentric nature of the dominant forms of knowledge aspirations as well as the rather unpluralistic way in which twentieth-century Western orders were taken to be of a permanent character. The manner in which knowledge was pursued did not lead to a quest for wider dimensions of empirical or philosophical resources. Once generated, the ahistoricized and theoretically hermetically sealed forms of knowledge were used in a fashion that made them permanently closed to new and different ideas and interpretations.

When it comes to the ideas of non-Western thinkers or to broader concepts that are used in the regional or national contexts, we should also ask whether we find ourselves in the middle of a process of invention or of discovery. This refers to scholars who themselves become the most active agents of highlighting certain ideas, the importance of certain thinkers, or concepts. They can do this because of their local and global position, thanks to being the first one(s) to uncover ancient or more recent local knowledge. However, this also means that the researcher finds her- or himself in a place from which he or she can comment on all the possible benefits of using this knowledge from a long neglected (or even unknown) source. In Western IR, we can think of the rather sudden rediscovery of Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* by Michael Doyle in the early 1980s.[20] The question can always be the same: Why this thinker and not another one? As we know, there were many different thinkers contemplating peace – and Kant's version seems to be one that more easily fitted the later use of democratic peace theory by twenty-first-century core IR scholarship.[21] The potential pitfalls for non-Western homegrown theorists are even more difficult to overcome because, for the majority of these scholars, it will likely be the first time that they encounter the thinker or local concepts as the information has previously been unavailable in Western-language summarized versions. This means the researcher of homegrown theorizing has the advantage of being able to convince her or his (still mostly Western) colleagues about the validity of these newly shared insights. However, as we know from the case of core IR in the West, earlier IR interpretations of European political thinkers and ideas have now become a hot target for sophisticated revisionist studies that are very quick to problematize the failures of these initial

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[19] Ekkehart Krippendorff, ed., *Internationale Beziehungen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1973). Another interpretation might point to the continuing disinterest in peace studies by mainstream IR. For a critical approach that analyzes Galtung's work, see; Nicholas Onuf, "Center-Periphery Relations: What Kind of Rule, and Does It Matter?" *All Azimuth* 6, no. 1 (2017): 5-16.

[20] Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1983): 205-35; Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs: Part II," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 4 (1983): 323-53.

[21] Inderjeet Parmar, "The 'Knowledge Politics' of Democratic Peace Theory," *International Politics* 50, no. 2 (2013): 231- 56.

approaches in IR. Martin Wight's triad-interpretations of Kant, Hobbes, and Grotius[22] have been overturned by later critics.[23] These earlier misinterpretations are examples that should caution today's homegrown theorizers. While the first scholars to uncover the non-Western ideas and thinkers in their local environments have the chance to do some very original research, they should be very careful to not exaggerate when interpreting their findings. This leads us to compare the difference between inventing ideas and discovering them. Kautilya, a long-neglected thinker, is now a more famous name in IR, even though his most important work was only rediscovered in the twentieth century. However, the following question could arise in some other cases: How do we define the authentic significance of these ideas and thinkers? Does non-Westernness suffice as a criterion, or could we actually even find more in the ideas of those thinkers, who were at the edge of their original societies, being more prone to transnational influences? These are some rather difficult questions to fully answer because they also point us towards the issue of globalization and its influence in the realm of ideas.

Scholars differ in their interpretations of globalization with regard to its timing, impact, spatial extent, and possible repetitions. While Wallerstein speaks of three waves of globalization, with late-nineteenth- and late-twentieth-century versions following those of the sixteenth century, the late German sociologist Ulrich Beck differentiated between globalism, globality, and globalization.[24] The first concept referred to the neoliberal ideology that supported a certain manner of globalization, whereas the second concept demonstrated conditions that were creating a new world political situation. It is this second concept, globality, that I want to use to approach our understanding of homegrownness, and thus to question the extent to which it could be at all possible in the narrower sense proposed by some scholarship.[25] Notwithstanding the differing and at times even conflicting definitions of globalization, the aspect of trans-border flow of ideas, individuals, and things could be said to be its major feature.[26] In this regard, it is no longer possible to think of ideas as a dimension that is not affected by these globalization dynamics.

The recent turn to global intellectual history (in addition to similar developments in more general areas of historical studies) points to the need for a more self-reflexive approach when dealing with homegrown theorizing in IR.[27] These studies provide us with important contributions that highlight the problematic nature of certain prevailing assumptions. For instance, today it is passé to assert the existence of unconnected local sources of knowledge (ideas, thinkers or concepts). IR's newly emerging community of non-core homegrown theorists should not make suggestions about 'undiscovered' new ideas because one cannot speak with great assuredness about indigenous approaches that have never been influenced by non-indigenous ones.[28] The significance of this point becomes clear when one turns to a dual option discussed by Homeira Moshirzadeh, concerning the distinction between

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[22] Martin Wight, *International theory: The three traditions*, ed. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter. (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).

[23] For an early example, see Timothy Dunne, "Mythology or Methodology? Traditions in international theory," *Review of International Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 305-18.

[24] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System I* (New York: Academic Press, 1976); Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* (London: Polity, 2000).

[25] For an example, see Aydınlı ve Biltekin, "Widening the World of IR".

[26] James Rosenau, *Distant Proximities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[27] Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

[28] In the case of 'hybrid' ideas, meaning those that arise due to the intersection of, and interactions among, non-core and Western ideational connections, one would also need to study their Western origins/dimensions. Otherwise, focusing only on the non-Western homegrown aspects would not provide a holistic understanding of the given ideas.

endogenous and *indigenous* approaches. With the first one, she refers to an approach that is about 'the needs, perspectives, experiences, and history' of a country or a people. Using that approach, one does not necessarily rely on local sources in the process of theorizing.[29] On the other hand, in indigenous approaches, Moshirzadeh recognizes the goal of 'creat[ing] a genuine different view based on' local sources and conceptualizations.[30] What one needs to engage with in a more careful fashion is this second dimension of indigeneity. In a globalized world, the individual scholar should have to convince us about the degree of his or her research topic's (ideas or thinkers), actual indigeneity. Even when this is not exactly the case, a less strict requirement in this process would be to expect that the ideas and thinkers discussed or presented are at least able to provide us with original tools. In this context, a less parochial or more globally shaped research agenda could provide us with important benefits. Following Acharya's ISA presidential address, the need for a Global IR is also the means for overcoming IR's Western (as well as non-core) parochialisms.[31] In this regard, it becomes an essential task for scholars interested in homegrown theorizing to deal directly with the impact of transnational dynamics, global influences, and the processes through which ideas and thinkers are differently evaluated and perceived across the world. As Bourdieu showed, the processes that shape the inter-cultural transfer of ideas are complicated and relate to several contingent factors.[32] Hence, even in cases of homegrown knowledge, once this is shared with a broader audience, its future paths are difficult to foresee. As well, one cannot know whether the 'original' meaning remained the same during this process, independent of past history and recognition of the ideas or thinkers studied.

A separate issue, which is not dissimilar from earlier developments in core Western IR, concerns the difficulty in stating where IR starts and where/when it ends. As postmodern scholarship has played a major role in widening the (philosophical) bases upon which new IR theorizing is taking place, it has become more difficult to provide an answer that would have lasting validity. However, in non-Western contexts, if one turns to earlier thinkers and concepts, one could also suppose that due to the long absence of non-West(ern) actors as shapers of world politics on a global scale, there is probably more to find there that relates to the domestic, local, and regional aspects, rather than to the international aspects per se. However, this suggestion should not be interpreted as a total rejection of non-Western knowledge on the international and the global, but rather as showing its relative weakness compared to the contemporary ideas in Western geographies dealing with the same beyond-the-local spheres. If such ideas and thinkers are in turn to be investigated, their use in IR could result in a process of invention. Obviously, all scholarly works are expected to lead to differentiations between high- and low-quality research. However, if the current interest in homegrown theorizing leads to a large number of unsubstantiated assumptions about non-Western ideas' and thinkers' relevance for world political thinking, we could reach a situation where it becomes challenging to easily identify useful work on non-Western contexts.

An additional aspect that could arise as a possible problem concerns the extent of representativeness of a supposedly homegrown idea, concept, or theory. For instance, in the

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[29] This means that while the local conditions and expectations determine the process, the answers can also come from non-local sources.

[30] Homeira Moshirzadeh, "Iranian Scholars and Theorizing International Relations: Achievements and Challenges," *All Azimuth* 7, no. 1 (forthcoming).

[31] Acharya, "Global International Relations".

[32] For a useful discussion on these issues, see Pierre Bourdieu, "Les conditions sociales de la circulation internationale des idées," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 5 (2002): 3-8.

case of divided societies‒(countries that lack a substantive unifying basis for their societal structure), not only different but also conflicting ideas and theories could emerge. In such a society, a scholar who turns his or her attention to only one of these two camps runs the risk that global IR would only become familiar with one of these two groups. Stated differently, even when one accepts the locality and/or originality (i.e. the homegrownness) of these ideas and concepts, the question is whether they provide homegrown theorizing or just lead the global scholarly community to interact with only one side of these divided societies. In Turkey, the permanent ideational divergences between the more secular-Western and the more religious-conservative sections in this society mean that even contributions from Turkish IR could end up reproducing these internal confrontations at the level of global IR. For non-Turkish scholars in various localities of the core, this possibility has at least two consequences: first, to what extent should one accept a certain idea or concept proposed or developed by one of the two sides as homegrown theorizing? Examined from the perspective of Western core IR, some could even assert that secular-Western IR theorizing in Turkey could at most be limited to the case of some homegrown alterations (to use the typology of Aydınlı and Biltekin). Such an interpretation could be based on the supposedly hermetic separation between Western and Islamic ideational pools,[33] which is itself a questionable claim.

A second point concerns the ways in which Western core IR and even global IR can engage‒simultaneously with both sides of these possible homegrown contributions. An answer to this lies in the earlier debates of Western IR, mostly known to us in the form of liberalism vs realism vs Marxism. Therefore, a counter-claim to the possibility that I refer to in this context would come from Western IR‒and its own internal differences that were also a natural consequence of the societal debates and political differentiations found there. It is even possible to associate various IR theories with various ideologies,[34] and even geo-cultural settings. However, in those instances, there is a major difference that could clearly rank certain approaches at certain times, with liberalism (for instance) being the default theoretical framework of the post-World War II world political system and IR theoretical bases.[35] In the case of what I call divided societies, with their conflicting ideational and theoretical contributions, the problem lies more directly with their internal lack of coherence, that is, an unresolved fight for domestic ideational (as well as political) supremacy. The very nature of these binary-structured societal confrontations leads us to a situation in which it becomes difficult to accept the continuous existence of both of these options. It is in this aspect that core IR as well as Global IR would need to determine how to deal with such contributions offered in the shape of peripheral homegrown theorizing.

4. Scholars

The position of the scholar matters. In the recent debates about IR's historical development and studies of disciplinary sociology, the role of IR scholars has not been used in a way that would offer us a comprehensive and comparative framework. The focus has been on individual members of the community, especially classical realists like Hans Morgenthau.[36]

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[33] Such strict distinctions can be used both by certain Eurocentric accounts and by fundamentalist interpretations in Islam, as these dualities help them to perpetuate their claims to provide (in their opinions) the single truth.

[34] Brian Rathbun, "Politics and Paradigm Preferences: The Implicit Ideology of International Relations Scholars," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2012): 607- 22.

[35] Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "All Hail to the Chief: Liberal IR Theory in the New World Order," *International Studies Perspectives* 16, no. 1 (2015): 40-9.

[36] For most recent examples, see Michael C. Williams, "In the Beginning: The International Relations enlightenment and the

While the interest in such distinguished 'founding fathers' of IR needs no further justification and is explainable with regard to disciplinary dynamics of repositioning, what matters much more for us is the ongoing lack of prioritization of the role of the scholarly community itself. In the significant debates that have emerged about external-based vs internal-based explanations, the main focus has been on the factors and actors that were shaping the trajectory of IR and its theoretical pathways.[37] One could emphasize the role of universities, governments, foundations, think tanks, wars, domestic political influences, etc. however, it is only in the last couple of years that IR has examined its own past and present scholars in a comprehensive way.[38] It is useful to think of scholars of homegrown theorizing as popularizers of ideas, concepts, and theories that they share with global IR community as distinct local and original products.

In the case of scholars, one of the major problems of Western core IR is the issue of Eurocentrism, which can be interpreted today as a generational issue: the earlier scholarly community being more directly tainted by such a position due to the way Eurocentrism functioned as a permanent background condition shaping various milieux in which scholars were emerging. However, this does not mean that even in a gradually post-Westernizing IR there is no trace of Eurocentrism left. The ongoing debates in core IR communities point to this legacy, at the same time highlighting the problematic nature of racism and imperialism as influential factors present at IR's birth and development.[39]

As discussed in the section on knowledge, the decisions and preferences of individual scholars determine the way IR theorizing will take place. In this context, when thinking of the stages that homegrown theorizing involves, one should begin with this aspect in our analysis. Whereas Aydınlı and Biltekin prefer not to consider the 'ethnic/national identity' of scholars, and focus instead on 'various aspects of how the non-core experience is drawn on and conceptualized,'[40] I offer a different approach, which is built on the premise that the (auto)biographies of the individual scholar matter in a way that includes not only their locality, but also their live histories and educational backgrounds.[41]

When speaking of homegrown theorizing, there are two aspects that require clarification: first, the idea of homegrown, and second, the concept of theorizing. While I have already provided an explanation of what is meant by theorizing in this paper, the other question still stands: How can one define homegrown? In the context of scholars, can one talk of

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ends of International Relations theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 647-65; Felix Rösch, "Realism as Social Criticism: The thinking partnership of Hannah Arendt and Hans Morgenthau," *International Politics* 50, no. 6 (2013): 815-29; William E. Scheuerman, "The Realist Revival in Political Philosophy, or: Why new is not always improved," *International Politics* 50, no. 6 (2013): 798-814; Vassilios Paipais, "Between Politics and the Political: Reading Hans J. Morgenthau's Double Critique of Depoliticisation," *Millennium* 42, no. 2 (2014): 354-75.

  [37] For an internalist example, see Brian C. Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998); for an externalist example, see Miles Kahler, "Investing International Relations: International Relations Theory after 1945," in *New Thinking in International Relations Theory*, ed. Michael Doyle and G. John Ikenberry (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 20-53.

  [38] Lebow et al., *The Return of the Theorists;* Naeem Inayatullah, ed., *Autobiographical International Relations: I, IR* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

  [39] See Sankaran Krishna, "Race, Amnesia and Education of International Relations," *Alternatives* 26 (1993): 401-24; and most recently, Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

  [40] Aydınlı and Biltekin, "Widening the World of IR," 5.

  [41] For an approach that discusses thinkers' connection to concepts (in their local settings) see Amado Luiz Cervo, "Conceptos en Relaciones Internacionales," *Relaciones Internacionales* , no. 22 (2013): 149-166. His distinction between 'thinkers of national expression,' (national) 'political and diplomatic thought,' and the thought patterns of scholars working in academic and research centers is useful to the extent that it enables us to better comprehend intra-national differences among the local scholars in various national contexts. See especially pp. 156ff.

homegrown theorizing only if the scholar doing it is herself or himself 'homegrown'? As stated above, this question is not answered affirmatively by all scholars involved in debates regarding non-core theorizing in IR. Important works that could be labeled as homegrown theorizing, or at least that could be interpreted as part of efforts to generate conditions favorable for such theorizing, have been presented by scholars who lacked earlier national/ regional ties to their locality of theorizing. One of the most active scholars in this field, Arlene Tickner, would be among the first examples; she is a US citizen who lives in Colombia and focuses on the significance of Latin American differences when it comes to theorizing in IR.[42]

Even if one insisted that there be local ties, the question arises about the educational pathways of individual scholars. In Turkey, two of the most prominent scholars with major contributions in the area of non-Western theorizing, Pınar Bilgin and Ersel Aydınlı, have doctoral degrees from British and American universities, respectively.[43] It could be asserted that studying abroad makes scholars even more prone to be interested in their society's potential contributions to IR, turning them into more active pursuers of local theorizing. However, as many examples from the Chinese context show, interest in homegrown theorizing could also emerge as a result of certain national feelings that aim to give a more prominent place to the national IR community on a global platform.[44] Therefore, one also turns to homegrown theorizing as a means of generating more favorable conditions for the further promotion of one's own society and state. This leads us back to the earlier distinction, suggested by Moshirzadeh, between indigenous and endogenous approaches. If homegrown theorizing goes beyond a mere interest in ideas and thinkers, becoming a means of extending the influence of one's country by prioritizing ideas that prevail in that local context, therein lies the potential danger of another form of parochialism reproduced in the guise of a pluralistic IR. This point presents us once again with the need to face the mistakes of Western core IR and its theorizing processes, and decide not to repeat those errors (of the past). It is important to stress that, notwithstanding its more recent emergence and gradual stabilization, the latecomer status of non-core IR does not allow it to overlook the mistakes of more established core IR. The reasoning is that, ultimately, all these scholarly communities belong to the same undertaking, that of the discipline of IR. Tempo-spatial divergences of the past are not an excuse because twenty-first-century IR is based on shared practices and a globalized disciplinary identity.

In the context of scholars, homegrown theorizing could overcome such dangers by openly acknowledging the limits of its possibilities. As a consequence, scholars of peripheral IR should not fall into the trap of any kind of centrism. The answer to Eurocentrism cannot come, for instance, in the shape of Sinocentrism.[45] An IR academic's tendency for theorizing the world in terms of her or his own national or regional framework would not lead us to a pluralistic form of Global IR if the suggested approach is itself ethnocentric. To the contrary, it would reproduce the earlier narratives in which the world was supposed to permanently turn around the West(ern societies and states), only this time in a non-Western version.

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[42] Arlene Tickner, "Hearing Latin American Voices in International Relations Studies," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 4 (2003): 325-50; Arlene Tickner, "Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World," *Millennium* 32, no. 2 (2003): 295-324.

[43] For some representative work, see Pınar Bilgin, "Thinking Past 'Western' IR?" *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2008): 5-23; Ersel Aydınlı and Julie Matthews, "Periphery Theorizing for a Truly Internationalised Discipline: Spinning IR Theory of Anatolia," *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 4 (2008): 693-712.

[44] Yiwei Wang, "Between Science and Art: Questionable International Relations Theories," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 8, no. 2 (2007): 191-208.

[45] See Wang, "Between Science."

This would be the case, of course, when the participants are themselves closed to differing perspectives. Therefore, scholars engaged in IR's homegrown turn should be clear about the consequences of differing forms of such theorizing. One of these is vernacularization (a process by which ideas from non-peripheral localities are reshaped and in turn used in its new localized quasi-hybrid version).[46] Other theorizing emerges from within nationalistic thought systems that would be perceived as the new trademark of non-core IR at the periphery. Obviously, these theories overlap with the typologies of Aydınlı and Biltekin as well as Thakur at certain points. In this context, the former approach could be located in Thakur's same-different combinations, while Aydınlı and Biltekin's homegrown alterations would be cases of vernacularization. On the other hand, if homegrown theorizing reifies certain nationalistic or essentializing tendencies in the locality in which it is developed, the danger of parochialism can be a permanent one. At the same time, however, this does not mean that all 'authentic homegrown theories' are merely tools of nationalist forces. In this regard, setting the standards on a more general level, that is, by expecting homegrown theorizing to not always be just about the periphery, in the context of its presumed interests, it becomes possible to find a useful means to prevent such theorizing's potential usage as a nationalistic, essentializing device. As discussed above, in times of a globalized world, the common starting point is to not assume that regions or states are hermetically sealed off from the (ideational) influence of others.

5. Theory

One problem that the new wave of non-core homegrown theorizing could also face regards the danger of not distinguishing between native theories and other versions. Here, the focus is on the possibility of finding supposedly untouched authentic local theories. As discussed in the preceding sections, such an assumption sees in homegrown theories locally existing or to-be-produced theories that would consequently be connected to global IR scholarship. However, as Aydınlı and Biltekin demonstrate, alterations at the national or regional levels can also be part of homegrown theorizing without claiming complete local authenticity. Remembering the discussions above, it is possible to state that even in instances where the theorizing process meets readily extant local theories, without any further need for scholars to engage with local sources of knowledge in order to create themselves such a theory, it is questionable whether these theories are as homegrown and original as they are supposed to be. This means that accepting the idea of alterations, or, following Thakur, the same-plot, same-language, same-character options,[47] the very idea of homegrownness can become detached from assumptions about originality and local authenticity. The novelty in certain homegrown contributions thus becomes a question of degree.

In order to explain this problematique in a clear manner, it is useful to turn to an example from Turkish IR. In an article on Turkish contributions to IR theories, Aydınlı and Matthews discussed the way the concept of the 'strategic middle power' was developed by Baskın Oran, a leading Turkish IR scholar.[48] Starting with the concept of the middle power and using insights about Turkey's regionally distinct position that enables it to make use of its multiple connections to the surrounding regions, Oran thus gave a new shape to the idea of middle

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[46]   See Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1996).
[47]   Thakur, "Africa and the Theoretical Peace".
[48]   Aydınlı and Matthews, "Periphery Theorizing".

power that has been mostly associated with some Anglo-Saxon countries (e.g. Canada and Australia) or some certain European countries (e.g. Sweden), whose world political impact has emerged from their normative weight in world politics. Does this concept present us with a useful means for theorizing? The answer should be in the affirmative, but one should also deal with the issue of how to determine at what point a concept leads to a theory. However, in this specific case, there are some rather surprising aspects that highlight the ways in which concepts are globally carried, reinterpreted, and reproduced. Oran first used the concept in the introduction section of his edited volume on Turkish foreign policy.[49] This volume, with contributions by a team of respected IR and foreign policy experts, mainly from the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University, has later become the standard and popular work used by Turkish universities and has been translated into English. The idea of a 'strategic middle power' was used by Oran to structure the later narratives of the volume on the developmental trajectories of Turkish Republican-era foreign policy.

How did he decide to pursue this concept of middle powerhood? In his own account, the concept struck him while reading the then-recently published book by William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000*.[50] In this book, Hale, one of the leading British scholars on Turkish politics, presented a detailed account of Turkish foreign policy's history, which started in the eighteenth-century and ended at the start of the twenty-first century.[51] Interestingly, he opened the book with a brief reference to middle powers, referring to a standard work on middle powers, Holbraad's *Middle Powers in International Politics*.[52] It was this usage by Hale that would influence Oran and lead him to shift the standard account on middle powerhood to the Turkish case by adding the adjective of 'strategic', thereby differentiating it from its previous associations with usually Anglo-Saxon middle powers. Making this process of academic interactions even more interesting, Hale would later suggest that he was not personally so sure whether the middle power concept was a fitting way to deal with the case of Turkey's world political role and position.[53] In the meantime, however, Oran was already providing the Turkish scholarly community with a broader understanding of middle powerhood in its new dimension, an approach that would become quite popular in the Turkish case.[54] In this regard, as Aydınlı and Biltekin and Thakur show, homegrown theorizing does not need to be only about locally-developed concepts and theories. What matters is the inclusion/ addition of local ideas by scholars who put great emphasis on widening IR and its theories on the bases of non-Western foundations, at the same time acknowledging that this also means accepting the limits of 'original' and 'authentic' insights. Otherwise, expecting such strictly novel aspects might prevent the development of actual homegrown theorizing by placing too much emphasis on the extent to which the contributions should be of complete local origin. In this regard, it becomes difficult to overlook the blurry lines of ideational interactions within global IR community.

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[49] Baskın Oran, ed. *Türk Dış Politikası* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001).
[50] William Hale, *pers. comm.,* 2005.
[51] William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[52] Carsten Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1984).
[53] William Hale, *pers. comm.,* 2005.
[54] Emel Parlar Dal, "On Turkey's Trail as a 'Rising Middle Power' in the Network of Global Governance: Preferences, Capabilities, and Strategies," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 19, no. 4 (2014): 107-36; Nükhet Ahu Sandal, "Middle Powerhood as a Legitimation Strategy in the Developing World: The cases of Brazil and Turkey," *International Politics* 51, no. 6 (2014): 693-708.

The above example is important because it directs our attention to the significance of academic studies' inherently non-locally-limitable feature. While IR discipline is under critique for its various parochialisms, it is, nevertheless, necessary to underline the constant dynamics of scholarly communication and connections that prevail even under the extant conditions. This means that if one considers the theory dimension as the third component of theorizing, then it becomes virtually impossible to insist on the idea of the 'originally native' theory. To the contrary, theories and their preceding conceptual building blocks are usually the result of intercultural and intersocietal influences, underlining once again the way the globalized world enables even more intensive scholarly connections that generate fresh, but still hybrid, insights into world politics.

At this juncture, there emerges a separate question, that of presentism. This relates especially to the aspects of knowledge and theory with regard to the times in which they can be first encountered. In the case of homegrown sources of knowledge, and even theories, how can we define the temporal context in which these ideas, thinkers, and theories (to be presented or even developed by scholars of homegrown theorizing) are to be located? As I discussed in the case of Wight's interpretation of leading European political philosophers, and showed in the section on the sudden popularity of Kant's framework on the possibilities of perpetual peace, we need to examine the ways in which ideas and thinkers, both from earlier and current temporal contexts, would fit the conditions of the twenty-first century. At the same time, it is possible to take a different approach and to assert that there is no theory (or knowledge) that can be used in all instances, thus preferring to provide theories that only engage with a limited number of historical eras. However, this just pushes non-core homegrown theorizing to repeat the mistakes of IR, including multiple difficulties raised in the broad critique launched earlier by Barry Buzan and Richard Little on (Western) IR's ahistoricism, presentism, Eurocentrism, anarchophilia, and state-centrism.[55] If homegrown theorizing turns to local sources of knowledge and thinkers without considering the extent to which the presented ideas' validity has certain temporal limits, then it would merely reproduce core IR scholarship's problematic approaches. Therefore, we need to pay great attention to the issue of historical ontology that focuses on the differing meanings of concepts and ideas.[56] In fact, the very reasons for the emergence of homegrown theorizing lie in the prevailing dissatisfaction of critical scholars in the peripheral (and their similarly concerned colleagues in the core) IR communities with the manner in which certain concepts were only thought of in their Western contexts and limits.[57] Therefore, this scholarship also needs to acknowledge that using local ideas in their local settings, without turning them into more cross-culturally usable tools, would merely lead us to provide IR with many theories whose limits are more or less set in their local frameworks. While this can be in line with another recent interest, the turn to analytical eclecticism,[58] it also carries the risk that instead of a pluralistic IR, the discipline takes the shape of a scholarly community that is even more divided than today's various camp-like structures.[59]

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[55] Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 18-22.

[56] Greg Anderson, "Retrieving the Lost Worlds of the Past: The Case for an Ontological Turn," *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (2015): 787-810.

[57] Tarak Barkawi, "On the pedagogy of 'small wars'," *International Affairs* 80, no. 1 (2004): 19-37; Tickner, "Hearing Latin American Voices"; Tickner, "Seeing IR Differently"; Arlene Tickner and Ole Wæver, eds., *International Relations Scholarship around the World* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[58] Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Traditions," *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 2 (2010): 411-31.

[59] Christine Sylvester, "Experiencing the End and Afterlives of International Relations/Theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 609-26.

6. Conclusion

In the face of multiple challenges and possible obstacles for the current interest in peripheral homegrown theorizing, it is important to turn our attention to ways of dealing with these questions in a manner that could succeed in providing this new area of scholarship with a more solid basis. In this regard, the following section presents some steps we could take to avoid the failures of Western core IR scholarship. The first step could be to engage in research projects that are framed in a more collaborative fashion, including not only local scholars but also Western core scholars. This is not about denying the capabilities of the former, but ensuring a more dialogic format to our research that paves the way for constant questioning and revisions, disabling the emergence of non-Western parochialisms as an alternative to the earlier parochialisms and various centrisms (Eurocentrism, West-centrism, etc.) of the core.

As a second step, it is useful to keep in mind problems with essentially contested concepts.[60] Ideas like democracy, violence, etc. have various meanings, some of them due to their lengthy journeys throughout Western history, some of them as a result of their simultaneous political existence in differing forms and understandings. When dealing with concepts from the periphery, the same level of caution should guide us, preventing perpetual reproductions of interpretations that reify a certain idea or concept. Otherwise, homegrown theorizing would repeat Western IR's earlier ontological, epistemological as well as methodological pitfalls that had actually enabled the current sympathy for homegrown theorizing in the peripheries. As discussed above, theorizing within divided societies is prone to providing conflicting ideas that could emerge from within the same country. Therefore, core scholarship should also aim at gaining broader insights about the periphery's background conditions.

Third, it is important to understand the general conditions that shape homegrown knowledge, theories, and scholars. As with the case of Western core IR, external and internal factors are difficult to analyze separately, and a better comprehension of the contributions by homegrown theorizing necessitates familiarity with the conditions that enable this process. Homegrown theorizing is a domain that presents its scholars with multiple advantages, but also requires clarity in dealing with local ideas, concepts, and theories. It is never too early to think about peripheral disciplinary histories and sociologies, as these will be the means with which to form the future trajectories of non-core and, increasingly, Global IR.

Fourth, under globalizing dynamics, the homegrownness aspect can more easily lose its distinct features, be it the knowledge and theories or the scholars involved in this theorizing process. For a pluralistic discipline that can follow in the steps proposed by Acharya and others,[61] it is important to understand the potential promises of homegrown theorizing in the context of today's global interactions. This means that the impact of homegrown turn can be even greater if it succeeds in not repeating the above-discussed errors of Western core IR scholarship. At the same time, such attention requires a better grasp of the possibilities provided by Global IR, which comes with a more level playing field within a gradually more post-Western discipline.

Taking these various aspects into account, it is possible to assert that the West still has much to say to the periphery. However, this time its impact could come by providing the homegrown turn with a list of the West's past mistakes. In their quest for homegrown theorizing, scholars of the periphery need once again to engage with Western core IR. This

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[60] W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society New Series* 56 (1955-1965): 167-98.
[61] See Acharya, "Global International Relations".

approach will be the means of preventing non-core IR from repeating the mistakes of the (Western) IR community. In this regard, the agenda of homegrown theorizing is (also) to learn from the past and from the West.

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